

and run a roller over them to prevent the land from drying up; frequent cultivation

LETTER FROM JUDGE FRENCH.

*Strawberries—Asparagus—Cherries, Peaches and
Grapes—Mats, Feglet Alas and Fish-Catching
—Oysters—Crabs—Cannals and Fish—*

WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 30, 1878.

A walk through the C-n-tre Market this morning, reminded me of Boston and the Horticultural Society, and of my brother farms in Massachusetts, and it seems to me that a few remarks on the way of life between Boston and Washington markets might be interesting to my friends at home.

This is the season of strawberries, which have been abundant for some weeks. The berries most in fashion here are the Wilson, Charles Downing, and Henshaw, of the West Kentucky and Boyden No. 30. The Wilson here as elsewhere, is the most hardy, prolific, cheapest and sourest of all, and is sold for five cents for a quarter of a dollar. The

honor, as large and fine fruit as any I have in market, and from four to five cents a quart, and the Charles Downing and Boyden and others named, are sold at about three quarts for a quarter. These are the retail prices, and the Wilsons are sold in buckets for about twenty-five cents a peck, or about the price of the others in the market. I have been away from home two seasons, but I think strawberries are sold in this market at about one-half our prices in Boston. I asked a gentleman who is often at Norfolk, where there is one field of two hundred acres of strawberries, most of which are shipped to New York, what he would sell them so cheap? "Oh," said he, "they take a lot of negroes with a jug of whiskey and some bread to do their work, and make them live on oysters, which they find for themselves, and it costs very little."

ANN ARCADE.

As to *aspidochelone*, they really know nothing

about it here. Not a bunch of what in Boston is called decent asparagus, is found in this market. Some of it is white, and about half length, cut entirely below the ground; some a foot long, and like the first crop of green hay; some with heads hanging down like a sheaf of wheat. I suppose the soil and climate are suitable, but the producers do not know their business. A season at Concord might teach them much on this special subject.

CUCUMBERS, PEACHES AND GRAPES.

In these, Washington greatly excels Boston market. I saw peaches of good size in market to-day, from South Carolina, and in the proper season here, the market will be full of the finest water-melons.

The varieties of grapes which are too tender for us, as the Catawba, Isabella, Delaware and the Rogers Hybrids, have season enough here, and the Concord are fine in

August.

All along outside the market-house are rows of negro-women, with bright colored handkerchiefs on their heads, sitting with various small articles of home production, bunches of wild magnolias and laurels, three or four live ducks or chickens, anasars and flag-nuts, a few berries and a few small fishes, and in their season, nuts and persimmons, or a "possum" dressed, ready to cook. The freedom which exists here to sell anything anywhere, and the practice of hawking fruit of all sorts about the streets, tends to prevent monopoly and to keep down prices. I think there has not been an hour in daylight for a fortnight, when the cry of "*straw-ber-ries*, five quarts for a quarter," has not been heard on Capitol Hill.

MEATS, VEGETABLES AND FISH.

On the whole, the market in Washington is better and cheaper, I think, for the buyer than any other in this country. We paid to-

day for the best beef steak twenty-five cents, for roasts of beef and lamb twenty cents, for the best butter thirty-five cents.

Vegetables of every kind known, with apples are abundant and cheap. Sweet potatoes are growing all around us.

The fish market is excellent. Potomac shad have been sold at ten dollars the hundred, and they here have from the river and bay, the Spanish mackerel, the blue crab and weak-fish, which we have not. Mackerel and lobsters are brought here from the East, and are too far from home to be really good. In place of lobsters, they have abundance of crabs and oysters, and other than any others in the world. I saw a day ago, the head one of a small party in the steamer to Norfolk, and learned how to take oysters and crabs, of which Chesapeake Bay seems to be full. For oysters, you may put off in a small boat, if only few are wanted, and take them in

Tongs are like two rakes pivoted two feet from the head, with handles about fifteen feet long. The teeth are of iron, and you thrust the head down to the bottom, open and close the handles and pull up a half bushel of oysters at a time. Again, you throw over from the side of the steamer a *dredge*, which is a sort of iron rake with a chain pouch attached to a line. It is dragged along by the vessel a few rods, and then hauled in by a dower men, and behold, a bushel of oysters. If you want crabs, while your boat is at anchor, you throw over a small fish line without a hook, with a piece of raw meat tied to it and a sinker which takes it to the bottom. By and by, you pull the line very gently and slowly. The crab will not like to lose his dinner, and follows up, the little fool that he is, to the surface, when you dip him up with a little net on a long handle, and he gets

boiled alive as the fitting reward for his wickedness.

THE CLIMATE.

For the whole year the climate of Washington, I think, as agreeable as that of any city in the Union. During winter there is no excessive cold, and in spring no chilly north-east winds like those of Boston. July and August are usually continuously hot, the thermometer remaining near 80 deg. during the nights, and higher in the day, but I think, going no higher than in the interior of New England. Those who can get away from the city during midsummer, to go to Boston, and those of us who are obliged to stay pretend that Capitol Hill is comfortable always.

With magnolias and fifty kinds of roses now in full bloom in our garden, and not a single musquito so far this season, we claim some advantages over New England. The roses of the finest sorts raised at the East in

hot houses, bloom here until December, all

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